

JULY 26, 1962

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Date: July 21, 1962
Time: 8:30 P.M.
Place: Hotel Richmond

United States

The Secretary of State
Mr. Kohler
Mr. Harriman
Mr. Hillenbrand

Germany

Foreign Minister Schroeder
Dr. Carstens
Mr. Krapf
Mr. Reinkemeyer

United States

Lord Home, Foreign Secretary
Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh
Mr. Samuel
Mr. Tomkins

France

Foreign Minister Couve de Murville
M. Baraduc
M. Roux
M. Durand

Subject: Berlin

Copies to:

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 S/S Ambassador BOMB
 S/P Ambassador PARIS/USRO
 S/S Ambassador LONDON
 EUR - 2 Ambassador MOSCOW
 INR/D US Mission Berlin

Couve, who had seen Gromyko for more than an hour before the Secretary, began by reporting his impressions. After a discussion of issues which he described as not important, Couve said Gromyko raised the subject of Germany and Berlin. He attacked France for the closeness of her relations with the Federal Republic. Marking back to the Franco-Russian Alliance after World War I, Couve said he responded by pointing out that this was not a useful segment of past history, which also included 1938-1939. French national interests in good relations with the Federal Republic were not

contrary

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contrary to Soviet national interests, and France did not object to good Soviet relations with the GDR. On Berlin, Gromyko made his usual speech about drawing a line under World War II and threatened, if agreement were not reached, that the Soviets would proceed with their peace treaty. In response to a query as to what would follow the peace treaty, Gromyko merely said that the Soviets would sign the treaty and the Western Powers would be responsible thereafter. Couve said he had responded that the Soviets would be responsible for the consequences and had advised against their taking serious risks on behalf of the national interests of the GDR. This could lead to a serious situation. There was no real discussion of this point, he added, and the meeting terminated with a brief further exchange on Laos.

The Secretary and Mr. Kohler then reported at length on the meeting with Gromyko which had taken place later in the day (Mr. Kohler spoke from his notes which are entirely consistent with the memorandum of conversation prepared by Mr. Akalovsky on the conversation with Gromyko). In the subsequent discussion the Secretary stressed we should take note of the fact that the Soviets now seem more insistent on signing a peace treaty. The Western Powers should accordingly review their contingency planning for this eventuality in the light of recent developments. He wondered whether the time would not soon come when we should say to the Soviets that their signing of a peace treaty cannot involve a number of specific points which would add up to an attempt unilaterally to dispose of Western rights in Berlin. The other Foreign Ministers agreed that the suggested review of contingency planning would be appropriate.

Some wondered whether, in hinting points to the Soviets sufficient to cover their retreat, we had really given them enough to do this. The Western Powers were not, of course, certain that the Soviets were interested in this. The Secretary commented that the short "principles paper" he had given Gromyko during the previous Geneva talks had provided such an opportunity for the Soviets if they had wanted to utilize it. Moreover, if it would help to have a UN High Commissioner for Berlin as a whole who would not interfere with our responsibilities in West Berlin, this could be discussed. The Soviets had also showed no interest in pursuing this line. They seemed interested only in driving the West out of Berlin.

In response to Couve's query as to whether the Soviets had ever shown any interest in taking up points in the U.S. "principles paper", the Secretary answered in the negative and indicated that Gromyko had instead complained that they had received no reply to

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their proposals on access. The Secretary had made clear that, since these were connected with the removal of Western forces from Berlin, there was no point in pursuing the subject. If Western force removal could be left aside, we could then talk further about a Four-Power body for access, adding certain control functions to arbitration and eliminating any veto. As far as the Soviet claim of respect for GDR sovereignty was concerned, the Secretary noted that the Soviets had never responded to the suggestion that with respect to access we were not trying to interfere with GDR sovereignty but merely requiring that the GDR not interfere with our access.

Lord Home said he felt the line which the Secretary had been taking was exactly right under the circumstances. However, he noted, we had never specifically told the Soviets that, if they accepted Western troops in Berlin and continuation of the occupation, there would be a number of other points on which they could count, for example, having permanent Soviet troops stationed at the War Memorial in West Berlin and having the Western Powers calling their troops "Police Forces". This might help to save Soviet face.

The Secretary noted that rumors were circulating around Geneva that Gromyko would bring forward some new proposals on Tuesday. The Secretary's present intention was still to leave Geneva on Wednesday to keep his Washington appointments.

Home asked whether the Secretary had received the impression that, if we reiterated the points in the U.S. "principles paper", this would save Gromyko's face. The Secretary said this did not appear in anything said today. His impression was that the Soviets were trying to get the highest price on the troop issue by threatening to sign a peace treaty. They might be trying to find out if they could get anything from us by further negotiations. If they concluded, in the negative, a number of alternatives were open to them. We were not sure the Soviets had made a final choice between these. The Secretary then mentioned various possibilities in connection with the peace treaty ranging from a Bols-Zorin type of treaty to the most radical devolution of power to the GDR over all access. We had tried to make every effort to clarify that, when all the arguments are put aside, what counts is that we are in West Berlin by right and are not going to be pushed out. This is a fact the Soviets must live with. If they start with this, other things can be worked out. If not, there will be trouble.

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Have observed that, if the Soviets were to drop their demands, they would require some face-saving in order to justify their letting the situation lie, for example, having a contingent of troops in West Berlin. The Secretary said our "principles paper" was intended to get into discussions over time. The Soviets could, of course, say to us privately that they would sign their peace treaty but we would not need to subtitle. We did not have the impression they are now prepared to tell us that our proposed modus vivendi is what they are looking for.

The Secretary and Howe noted there were no signs of Soviet military or diplomatic activity indicating they were moving towards an early peace treaty. However, the Secretary added, they might sign an attenuated peace treaty, but we felt it unlikely that they would commit themselves completely to Ulbricht. Coove noted that Gromyko had not said what the results of signing a peace treaty would be. The Secretary commented that Gromyko did not want to indicate this clearly at this point. It might be worth trying to find out more as to what respect for the sovereignty of the GDR involved. Coove said this in part meant giving the GDR control of our communications. The Secretary recalled an early Thompson-Gromyko exchange in which the latter had responded to a statement that we cannot recognize the GDR by saying that we already did. However, he had not returned to this formulation. The Secretary also noted that the Soviets in general have used more severe language on Berlin with other people than with us directly. In fact, Gromyko had been relatively mild until he pulled out a paper and read prepared remarks.

The Secretary responded in negative to Howe's query as to whether there had been any hints of a Soviet desire for a summit meeting. However, the Secretary said, he had the impression Gromyko had come to Geneva in the hope of working out a general agreement which could then be signed at the summit. He had the impression the Soviets were looking forward to an eventual summit.

The discussion concluded with consideration of guidance to press officers. There was agreement that the Western comment should be restrained and limited to stressing that the meeting today was part of a continuing process of discussion.

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